DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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GRIERSON ASKS FOR A COMMON PLAN

A letter to D.N.L. from John Grierson

You asked me to put down my observations on documentary development as I saw them recently in England. I won't do this because I was not there long enough to get any really intimate knowledge of the work of the various units. I did, however, see enough to think that documentary problems in England are very much the same as anywhere else: involving the same re-orientation from war uses to peace-time uses; at a speed somewhat delicately relative to the speed with which, say, the Foreign Office, the Board of Trade and the Department of Civil Aviation are re-orientating themselves. I mean that the phase we are going through is preparatory, but may not be the less definite and active for that.

Dumbarton Oaks, Bretton Woods, the world aviation conference in Chicago, Lord Keynes' recent visit to Washington on Lend-Lease, the U.N.R.R.A. world conference at Montreal, the I.L.O. conference at Philadelphia, even the Council of Ministers of Education of the United Nations in London are not exactly indefinite, though they are certainly preparatory. Nor, for that matter, are the Board of Trade's relations with Mr. Rank. These are only in the international sphere. Looking around me in Canada, I see them matched by a score of national activities of the same highly active yet preparatory character. Schemes for rehabilitation are already drawn and so are housing plans. Active preparations are being made for the reconversion of industry, for a new deal in national health, for economic research which will promote full employment, for regional planning, and for specific agricultural and industrial developments. We have certain precise views, as you may have noticed, on the development and management of global air traffic, a matter in which we are geographically, not to say geo-politically, concerned; and I think you may reckon on this particular and large sector of the arctic and sub-arctic circles attempting to match anything they may be doing across the Bering Strait.

War or no, a lot of people are not just looking forward nationally and internationally but are driving forward; and it is obvious that, war or no, this is a time of times and no time, strategically, to be tired. If I say that the national preparations are very relative to international preparations, I mean that agricultural plans have something to do with U.N.R.R.A. and the rehabilitation of the hard hit peoples throughout the world; and so have industrial plans. But I also and even more emphatically mean that the internationales that are growing up are functional internationales, concerned with very concrete things like food and labour conditions and the disposition of opportunity, and that the basic human essentials we are all thinking of nationally, in the way of jobs and houses and good cities to live in and amenities both rural and industrial, are, for the first time on a large and distinctive scale, the very things we are beginning to legislate for internationally. You will note perhaps how the old-time diplomat is giving way to the new-time diplomat who is expert about something that matters; and that the old pleasant chit-chat of diplomatic exchange becomes quietly unreal.

Now this, I would say, has something to do with the present problems of documentary, for it has everything to do with its opportunities. I shall tell you frankly how I felt when I got back. I liked the films I saw, and particularly the films made by the new directors, meaning the directors who have come along in the past four years. I mention them particularly because we didn't do nearly so well ourselves in our first four years, either in technical standards or in grasp of what the documentary shape can do in its native capacity for expression. The technical advantage of a past to work on is great and —make no mistake—it gives England an enormous lead today. That is to say, if it is mobilised properly and made use of. I doubt if it is. You have several units which are creatively first rate: here and in the United States we have, as yet, perhaps no more than half a dozen. On the other hand, the British units are spread-eagled in-so-far as they don't work with precision to a national plan.

England is not nearly so bad in this respect as the United States, and there is, in fact, no basis of comparison, but England is not nearly so co-ordinated in documentary films as it might be. I got the impression that there are too many government agencies to begin with. If there were only two, the M.O.I. and the British Council, there would still be one too many if they do not work to a common plan; but it did not appear to be even so simple as that. I got the impression that what with this department and that, this sponsor and that, there were too many cooks around and that the Cook Proper had to fight for his life to get near the pot. It's not healthy for it means the unnecessary complication of simple processes, and delays, and frayed tempers, and a general loss of national effectiveness.

Of course, England's film operation as a whole is very large and a few individual civil servants cannot, by themselves, liquidate the vestigial remainders of authority from the dark and dismal thirties; and the Treasury set-up is all wrong for film making; and the Civil Service method of employing people is sentimental to a degree in so far as it has a passion for staying stuck with its dullards. If they have not brought the house down like death watch beetles I can only wonder at the quality of the people, inside and outside the Ministry, who have kept so much decency of taste, and so much creative will, in spite of them. Indeed I must emphasise again that the sum total of even the disparate efforts is deeply impressive. But if the efforts

(*continued overleaf*)

were not so disparate and everyone were working to a considered plan, with every difference in unity allowed for, the result would be overwhelming.

I don't know what the answer is on the organisational side: whether it's a question of the M.O.I. and the British Council getting together, or of a Government Film Office attached to the Stationery Office, or perhaps better still, to the Privy Council, with a Board of insiders and outsiders, deeply representative of the public interest, to guide it. It's not for me to say, but I presume P.E.P. has laid its piece on the line and I did get the impression that the interested Ministers were giving a good deal of sensible thought to the various possibilities. Certainly the first problem to be solved is the centralisation of all Government sponsorship on the Government side and the development of a relationship with the outside units on a basis of one-for-all-and-all-for one or whatever you call it.

I don't think it's an impossible trick, though it is all too easy to talk from Canada where government sponsorship is in fact centralised and where we are, as I think, into the stage of something like a common outlook and a unified effort. I have told you before that it is relatively easy to get a unified effort in a young country, with the first fine careless rapture of documentary upon it, and nothing but the future to remember, and not nearly so easy in a country where political issues are so confused as to permit, shall we say, a certain degree of inconsequence. On the other hand, I do beg you to note these political and social preparations, national and international, which I mentioned at the beginning. That is what documentary is about, yet it is at the present time all too weak in its own preparations. It's not just a question of organisation but of an imaginative anticipation of services to be rendered. So I say to myself in Canada; and I think we are in the same boat exactly. If documentary is not preparing itself intensively for these rehabilitations and reconversions and researches, these health and housing and nutrition programmes, these replannings of villages, towns, cities, regions and rural backhouses, I don't know what it's thinking of.

Social Reference

It has been a wonderful thing to see that, in spite of the war and the special difficulties of film making in England, the documentary people there have remembered the essentials of social reference. They have not been fooled into the fallacy that fighting films give anything more than one layer of the present reality. But I keep on feeling that the documentary group as a whole is not at the centre where political and social planning is being thought out and legislated, or not close enough to the centre. It is not good enough to be on the outside looking in, waiting on someone else's pleasure for an opportunity to serve social progress.

These new social plannings mean primarily a great deal of research on the part of the documentary people. They mean that the people in documentary should know what is coming up and be able to think along with it, or, better still, ahead of it, if plans for the creative presentation of these developments are to be presented. What will happen otherwise? The documentary people will be standing behind their cameras shooting to other people's thinking, other people's initiative and other people's readier imagination. Their opportunity to make a creative contribution will certainly be limited and their creative freedom lessened accordingly.

The organisational side, I know you have been considering and making plans for. What I think we need, as well, is an intensive development of our research services, along the lines suggested by past experience in, say, the nutrition field, but deliberately planned to cover the very wide field of public consideration which is now opening up. We need more and more within our ranks men with economic and other expert knowledge, who can follow the major national and international developments in every field of political and economic and social need; men in particular who can understand public affairs well enough and have the interpretative sense strongly enough developed to make the complexities of public affairs a matter of common understanding. The true documentary shape is still inside the subject and neither humanistic glosses nor æsthetic avoidance will provide any equivalent. If only from a practical point of view, it will be wise for film makers to have realistic and imaginative proposals ready for each and all of the national and international directorates as they develop. These directorates will have to be told; and it will be natural for them to respect those who have already gone to the trouble of comprehending their problems.

I know this extension of research services is going to be difficult both for lack of men and lack of funds, but it may be essential for all that. It seems to me worth a very special effort, in co-operation with the people in the Ministry and the people in P.E.P. and other political planning groups within the same field of public service. It is unthinkable that there should be any thought of divisions at this time. Now may be a time when our many associates in the universities might become real allies.

Common Progressive Ground

The only criticism you will have to face is that this service of governmental schemes may be all too intimate. There may be a sense of independence lost. I can only urge that the one way of contributing creatively to any process of interpretation is to know something about it and be in a natural position to contribute to it. Independence like freedom is not much of a concept if it only means the ineffectiveness of the sidelines. You may also strike the political argument: that this that and the other government scheme is no good and not worth working with. Well, there is a lot of common progressive ground in all these schemes for the future, and enough, I think, to work on and deepen as documentary can. In any case, the public interest, so far as the realistic practice of documentary is concerned, is nowhere else that I can see.

As a matter of incidental interest but not, I think, dissociated from the international development, we are trying these days to co-ordinate our production schemes in Canada with those in Washington, beginning I hope with common production schemes on housing and safety in factories. Why make a Canadian six on housing say, covering the same ground as an American six, when we can plan together and both have the advantage of twelve? If this develops it would be rational to ask London to come in with a British six. Each would be better served at home and have international exchange into the bargain. It is one of these simple and obvious things that ought to have been done long ago. In the meantime Hawes' film on Labour Management Committees, made in England by Canada for Canada, is running around the world, and nobody is sure whether it's an English film or a Canadian one, and nobody cares.

The possible combinations are obviously various. For another, we are much interested at the moment in Mr. Rank's interest in Odeon Theatres of Canada. Mr. Rank will, I am sure, consider his interest as implying a measure of Canadian citizenship, with the measure of responsibility that goes with it. All peoples these days take the same view of the international traders who come among them, and Canada is no different from the others. We shall welcome the British entry and it is a very healthy thing to have more British films around; but, at the same time, we shall look for more Canadian news on British screens, more British theatres for Canadian shorts and, on occasion, a British feature film produced on, or preferably in, Canada.

Incidentally, the documentary units will have to decide their attitude to the Rank development. Do they want his theatres or don't they? If not, what is going to be their policy, if Rank really stretches out on the documentary side? After all, documentary is no longer a secret process.

The answer, I think, is where I put it before. It is not a question of this unit or that, this interest or that, but a question, first and all the time, of serving best the rehabilitation and reconstruction which life these days is all about. The only bargaining weapon the documentary group ever had was this primary sense of public service; and it is the only guarantee of continuing independence I can think of.

But, we can't stay still either as to material or as to formulæ. The original bright blue eyes are not enough, and hardly a thing we said

ten years ago means a thing today. The idea that was new has to go on being renewed where the new reality of public service now so richly lies; and there is so much ground to cover that it seems almost like starting at scratch. I apologise for suggesting it after five years of great preoccupation and strain, but war or no, a lot of hard thinking has to be done now and a lot of hard work.

Peace, as Father Divine says, it's Wonderful.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Co-op.

AS SOON as the New Year had opened the trade press went into a flutter on the announcement of the possible formation of a chain of co-op cinemas with patron members presumably participating in the dividends. The matter came up because the Faulhouse Co-op Society in Scotland is considering the building of a cinema after the war. The Chairman of the Edinburgh Section of the C.E.A. thought the move a menace. A number of the meeting suggested persuading the renters not to serve the Co-ops with films, but other members thought the K.R.S. wouldn't play.

We believe the setting up of Co-op cinemas could do nothing but good. The Co-ops have the commercial organising experience, and sufficient funds to see them through their teething troubles. They may yet be an answer to monopoly tendencies. We hope, too, that the Co-ops will strike a line of their own and not become merely purveyors of conventional entertainment. The country has more than enough of this already, and the Co-ops have a great opportunity to develop a new style of programme, and to bring a new vitality into the film industry. If the Co-ops go into the film exhibition business, sooner or later they will go into production.

By Gift or by G-B.

A FIERCE underground war will presently come to the surface—a war between those who believe in the free distribution of films to schools with production financed by the Ministry of Education, Government Departments, public authorities and others, and those who believe that schools should hire or buy the prints they use, and that production should be unsponsored and speculative. The Ministry of Education, like any nervous old lady, has pulled a sheet over its head. The Film Institute hunts with the hounds, runs with the hare and sits up in a tree all at the same time. Yet the issues are serious and must soon be settled, we hope in the light of public discussion and not down the backstairs of Film House.

The supporters of free distribution and sponsored production believe first that speculative production will lead to an unbalanced selection of films, for it will be in no one's commercial interest to make relatively more expensive films for relatively smaller audiences, however important these may be. Secondly that a cheaper film will have an advantage over a better though more expensive film on the same theme. Thirdly that some producers, greedy for turnover, will try to make each film suit several different age groups which properly should be catered for separately. And finally that—as has been too often the case in the past—film education in poor neighbourhoods or under relatively poor local education authorities will suffer.

The opposition says that sponsored production will lead to an unhealthy regimentation and standardisation of film product, though Government sponsorship so far does not support this argument. Nor is there any reason to suppose that a great many non-Governmental organisations will not find it worth while to sponsor films of many different kinds for free distribution. It is admitted, too, that a subsidy is necessary in order to enable local education authorities to subsidise the schools to hire or buy the films they want. In fact, the opposition wants the Government's cash but without obligation and with unlimited profit.

Which of the two systems will prevail no one yet knows, but many teachers and all the independent documentary units favour the free distribution of educational films, looking for a reasonable profit on the sponsored production of each film, and not for the speculative, even if greater, profit which might derive from the whims of the market or the adventitious spur of advertisement.

Changes

BASIL WRIGHT has left Film Centre to take up the producership of the Crown Film Unit. As John Grierson's first recruit to the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit and a key figure in the Post Office Unit, Wright will be the first documentary maker to be associated with the Government's Unit in each of its three phases—E.M.B., G.P.O., Crown. Wright will be sadly missed from the Editorial Board of *D.N.L.*

At the same time Arthur Elton has left the M.O.I., where he has been in charge of production in the Films Division since January, 1941, to rejoin Film Centre which he helped to found and where post-war plans for documentary are now being made. Elton will take Wright's place on the *D.N.L.* Board.

Film Bulletin

THE FILM INSTITUTE started the Film Bulletin in 1934. Its aims were to supply information about the film in education, and reviews were all angled from this point of view. Judging by the recent copies issued, the editors of the Film Bulletin have forgotten the aims. The paper is crammed with reviews of feature films, many of which are of no interest, and none of which are available for teachers and private users. Relatively few recent M.O.I. or other films for non-theatrical use are mentioned. Has the Film Bulletin become primarily an excuse for its editors to attend feature trade shows in their working hours? If so it is time they either gave up business or devoted themselves to films which teachers and others might want and can obtain.

Peter Burnup

PETER BURNUP, the London correspondent of the *Motion Picture Herald*, has since his appointment, made no secret of his admiration for Mr. Rank. American readers of the *Herald* may indeed be forgiven if they should assume that the task of reporting the British film scene is identical with the enthusiastic publicising of Mr. Rank and his works. Mr. Burnup's writing is also distinguished by a second characteristic. He loses no opportunity of denigrating the efforts of organised labour in the British film industry and, indeed, appears to believe in the organisation of film-making on a strictly feudal basis. In a recent issue of the *Motion Picture Herald* he succeeded in effecting a most happy marriage of his two personal passions. Sensitive to the views which have been expressed in some quarters on the prolonged process which is intended ultimately to result in the appearance of *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Mr. Burnup attempts to defend Mr. Rank by suggesting that some of the difficulties which this film have encountered are due to lack of co-operation by labour. He says that the "closed corporation of labourites" in spite of "lashings of overtime pay" have failed to react well to the need "to keep the whole lot working until there was barely a half-hour's drinking time left in Denham's and the adjacent pubs". We find it most surprising that Mr. Burnup in his efforts to extol Rank and to damn labour should have allowed himself to get involved in such matters.

The same article is illuminating on Mr. Rank's versatility as a producer. Still in relation to *Caesar and Cleopatra* we are told "there never has been a film with such intense tribulation, whose progress has been the occasion of such anxiety. . . . Mr. Rank, in person, went to the Treasury Department to ensure that Claude Rains' presence in this country, over and above his officially allotted time, would not mean that Whitehall would demand the vast sum of money which ordinarily would become due from Mr. Rains on account of income tax. The Treasury Department—such is the Rank prestige, not to say influence—played ball."

If Mr. Burnup's information is correct then Mr. Rank is to be congratulated on his private enterprise. But the humbler taxpayer may surely be forgiven if he feels that there is something rather unusual about the whole business. The precedent of calling on the Treasury in order successfully to secure an adjustment will come in useful for every citizen with income tax troubles of his own.

Meditations on Henry V

by E. W. & M. M. Robson

(Authors of *The Film Answers Back*)

THESE few lines are in no way intended as an adverse criticism of Laurence Olivier's very fine performance as the king or of his production of the film itself. They are meant rather as a revelation of the shortcomings of the powers that be, behind the scenes, who are supposed to dictate policy; those men of wealth and wisdom who know or think they know how best to dispose of the huge sums that a kindly and complacent public and the benevolent workings of the Quota Act have enabled them to accumulate.

Let it be said at once that Olivier and his happy band of men have done the best it was possible to do in a most trying and difficult undertaking. Money talks, and if money says in effect: "Here is your mandate. These are the terms of reference. Use now this Technicolor but give us Shakespeare pure and unadulterated", then Olivier can do no other than to work to that mandate, and if in the result the picture excites the eye but fails to touch the heart or the pocket of the wider public you cannot legitimately blame Laurence Olivier.

(Professional film critics and West End audiences are in a different case. Their minds work on a set of cultural memory traces that predispose them to the production. They are enthusiastic, but it will take more than enthusiasm to recover the half million pounds that *Henry V* is reputed to have cost.)

What is wrong with the mandate that Olivier has tried so faithfully to execute? The answer is so elementary that one feels like blushing at the thought that the destinies of the film industry should be entrusted to such simpletons. Both theory and practice have demonstrated that a 20th century medium catering for a 20th century world-size audience cannot be successfully harnessed to a 16th century cultural expression which was born under the stress of very different social needs. The theory was established as long ago as 1939 in *The Film Answers Back*, and in practice Hollywood provided the examples of failure in Reinhardt's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and in the Colman-Shearer *Romeo and Juliet*.

The gifts of thought and verbal expression are among the most wonderful of human faculties and in Shakespeare those gifts are precious beyond measure. But it is a mistake to disconnect his plays from the primal, contemporary, Elizabethan realities which gave them birth and endowed those plays with meaning even to the lowliest of the groundlings of the time. To-day the language of Shakespeare requires an effort of mind even among the best educated, but in his own day (and Shakespeare wrote to eat as well as for art), his language *was* the common people's language and as clear as day. Even the long passages in French in *Henry V* were much more intelligible to the commonality of Shakespeare's day than they could possibly be to the masses of our own. Court French was still in vogue and the close ties with France gave Englishmen a certain facility with the French tongue, just as the average Belgian to-day is familiar with both Flemish and French.

With these obvious differences of comprehension and language of Shakespeare's customers in 1600 and the world cinema-goers of 1944-45, with the warnings of the Shakespeare fiascos from Hollywood already cited, how did Denham propose to win where Hollywood had lost? Technicolor. That's the answer. Money again and lashings of it scattered *ad lib.* with little regard to a reasonable commensurate money's worth return. That will rope 'em in!

But will it?

Do these people ever read their own scripts or understand what they read? Shakespeare himself in the very prologue of Henry V that Leslie Banks as the Chorus declaims so effectively explains to all and sundry and for all time, the limitations of his medium. We quote:

> Suppose within the girdle of these walls
> are now confined two mighty monarchies,
> Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
> The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
> *Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;*
> Into a thousand parts divide one man,
> and make imaginary puissance;
> *Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them*
> *Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;*
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
> Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
> Turning the accomplishment of many years
> Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
> Admit me Chorus to this history;
> Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
> Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

There it is in black and white—our own italics. That is how Shakespeare asked his audience to bear with him while unfolding his play at that Globe in Southwark with the roof open to the elements. But Technicolor and the modern cinema have overcome the physical disabilities that the 16th century Chorus in the play laments. That is why the cinema was invented and developed. In the original Shakespeare you are asked to *imagine* a scene and with the greatest power with which words have ever been endowed you are assisted to use *your own innate gift of imagination* to fill out the scene.

But Technicolor makes a direct, unimpeded and immediate appeal to your gift of *sight*, a gift which, whether you like it or not, you share with the other mammals and the birds. You are bound to fall between two stools if you thus try to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare. To employ Technicolor the way it is used in *Henry V* is like pointing to a drawing and amplifying "This is a cow" by adding "and note, it is not a bull or an elephant".

Shakespeare offers still another lesson to some of our film chiefs. King Henry in the play wanders among his soldiers at night, incognito, and sits down among them to listen—and to learn. Would that our own magnates would follow that excellent example. If they were to take a few days off from their arduous labours and sit among their shilling patrons, incognito, at their own cinemas in Bolton or Wigan, they too would, in the words of the solicitors' advertisement "learn of something to their advantage".

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NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Men of Rochdale. *Production:* Verity Films. *Direction:* Compton Bennett. *Photography:* Reg Wyer. *Script:* Reg. Groves. *Music:* John Greenwood. 42 mins.

This year is the centenary of the British Co-operative Movement. A hundred years ago the Rochdale Pioneers opened their first shop, and from these humble beginnings a great movement serving millions of consumers has arisen.

To celebrate the occasion the C.W.S. has sponsored its most ambitious film project to date. *Men of Rochdale* is a four-reel film telling the story of those early days, reconstructing the almost insuperable difficulties that confronted the handful of idealistic men and women—poor weavers—who courageously faced at first the scorn and then the active sabotage of the Rochdale business men.

Reg. Groves who wrote the script is thoroughly familiar with his subject, and enlivens the film with authentic details and incident that always heightens the interest of the spectator and emphasises the truly remarkable achievement of the pioneers. His sense of the dramatic is particularly impressive in the scene when their opponents, now thoroughly frightened, spread the rumour that the store is bankrupt. Creditors fill the shop demanding their money but by a consummate piece of bluff, worthy of a skilled poker player, the Pioneers' Treasurer saves the day, although the cash box is empty.

Compton Bennett, the director, has turned in a competent job, although his predilection for orthodox studio clichés is at times in competition with the essential authenticity of the story. An attempt to create a stock humorous character is singularly unsuccessful. The ending of the film, also, is not quite satisfactory. The ghosts of early Co-operative pioneers, superimposed against a background of clouds, make lofty declarations to the effect that the Movement has still a long way to go before its fundamental ideas are realised. The sentiments are excellent but the means used to put them over are out of harmony with the rest of the film, and produce a somewhat cathedral atmosphere in what is otherwise a pretty lively job of work.

These criticisms apart, *Men of Rochdale* is a commendable achievement and deserves the fullest success. We hope that more films on the history and achievements of the Co-operative and Labour Movements will follow.

March of Time. No. 1. 10th year. *British Imperialism.* 18 mins.

Subject: A tour of the British Empire, largely scenic in the visuals and cautiously political in the commentary.

Treatment: Many of the older members of the British documentary movement gained their apprenticeship by editing somewhat commonplace stock shots from ancient Empire films. For them a viewing of March of Time's *British Imperialism* may be recommended as a source of acute nostalgia. It is quite like old times to see a Dominion cinematically constructed before our eyes from the cut-outs of itinerant cameramen with a quicker eye for a pretty picture than a plain fact. It is even more stimulating to find such a traditional editorial exercise embellished with a commentary which seeks to reveal the political excitements deriving from the Imperial conception. The film gives a potted economic and political history of each of the Dominions, seeks no shape beyond this simple listing and comes on the whole to friendly conclusions. Even in the case of India we are largely exonerated.

Propaganda Value: This is a useful film to have circulating in America since its conclusion that the British Empire represents the "largest system of organised freedom in the world's history", must on the whole be an aid to Anglo-American relations. It is a pity, however, that the film's conclusion could not have been reached by means of somewhat more relevant visual evidence. The travelogue treatment proves neither the existence of freedom nor of its opposite.

The Big Pack. *Production:* R.A.F. Film Unit. Music by Gordon Jacob played by R.A.F. Symphony Orchestra. M.O.I. 35 mins.

Subject: The work of maintenance command of the R.A.F. in organising supplies necessary for a major overseas operation.

Treatment: Maintenance command is given notice of a forthcoming overseas expedition, and is left with the task of providing and despatching aircraft and all the thousand and one necessary pieces of equipment, clothing, spares, etc., which make up the material of a modern air force. We see how the supply organisation works and to introduce some dramatic suspense into the film the time given for the completion of the job of supply is drastically limited. Working against time we see R.A.F. personnel ranging from the officer-in-charge and his W.A.A.F. assistant down to the humblest A.C.2. Necessarily the film contains many hurried telephone conversations and frequent scenes of office wallahs hurrying from desk to desk with messages of high priority. These episodes are often cursed by the ultra-refined accents which somehow seem inseparable from any screen appearance of the R.A.F., and the events depicted rarely become enthrallingly exciting. The scenes of Hurricanes being readied, of bombs emerging from the caves in which they are stored and of vast store-room vistas of identical objects are more interesting, but the material is always far short of sensational.

Propaganda Value: No doubt each section of each of the Services has some sort of claim to screen space. To tell the story of supply is no easy matter but since it is a vital matter of which the public should not be left in ignorance (it is healthy to be reminded that war is frequently a dull business) it might have been wiser to have dramatised an actual supply job giving real facts and figures and without the total exclusion of human fallibility. The real story, with disaster just around the corner often averted by some brilliant extemporisation, would have meant more than the quite perfect but dull example which we are here given.

Jungle Patrol. Presented by the Commonwealth Dept. of Information. *Direction:* Tomm Gurr. *Theatrical:* 20 mins.

Subject: Australian troops in New Guinea.

Treatment: This is a very well made, moving and important film. As we sit comfortably here in England with our heads full of floating docks and Bailey bridges, block busters and rocket-Typhoons, flame-throwers and box-barrages, it takes a real effort of imagination to have any idea just how much it needs, in the South Pacific, in the way of human blood, sweat, misery and discomfort to get just one single bullet winging its way in the vague direction of the Japs. This film shows you just that, very well and very clearly. It follows a party of eight Australian soldiers in their journey by plane from Port Moresby to their forward base and from there on foot, across rivers, swamps and jungle, up, up with their 50 lb. packs, thousands of feet into the Finisterre mountains till they reach the front line, go out on patrol and take part in an assault on Shaggy Ridge which drives the Japs from their positions and brings the Allies half a mile nearer in their 3,000 mile journey to Tokio. The film is quiet, almost precise; but it has a moving sincerity in its obvious desire to speak up for the boys who have so far been badly neglected for the glamour of the European battlefield. It doesn't bring alive the eight soldiers concerned—in fact its efforts in that direction are very half-hearted—but it does bring alive the misery, danger and discomfort of their lives; wet from sweat, rain or wading through swamps, attacked by every kind of lice and vermin and a dozen fatal diseases, living two by two in little tents of which each carries half, with an exclusive diet of bully, up in the mountains where the only other human beings for miles are the enemy. The film is very well shot and commentated and altogether quite one of the best of the war films.

Propaganda Value: First-class.

Transatlantic Airport. *Production:* Crown for M.O.I. *Direction:* Michael Gordon. *Photography:* F. Gamage. *Sound:* Ken Cameron. Theatrical. 15 mins.

Subject: The scope and organisation of Prestwick Airport.

Treatment: Technically, this film is well up to the usual Crown standard, neatly constructed, nicely photographed, good sound, and for those who are still interested in that sort of thing, plenty of glimpses of how the wheels go round. But apart from that, it must be said that it is of an amateurish, comic even, banality that we have never seen from Crown before. There is a civilian hanging about (are you there, M. le Marquis de St. Exupery?) waiting, need it be said, for that precious dollop of medicine that is being fetched 3,000 miles to save his sick boy, now two days unconscious. What's wrong with sonny-boy and why there was none of the required jollop over here, we're never told. Also, draped around the furniture sipping their drinks are one of each of half a dozen different nationality officer pilots, all suitably surprised and amazed at the way air travel annihilates distances ("How's your hangover, Jack? Boy, did we have a party in Rio two nights ago!"). And of course the sincere, thinking type who believes that seeing all these people of different nations is going to make you understand and like them, and so prevent war ("No, fellows, I'm serious!"). That anyone should still take seriously these days H. G. Wells's herrenvolk-of-the-air idea is certainly comic enough, but on top of that, after the experience of this war, to trot out the old "to know is to like" stuff is a bit too much. Because the Ritz in London is indistinguishable from the Ritz in Paris or the Ritz in New York or anywhere else and just as nasty, doesn't mean that the international age has arrived—only that the rich are much the same anywhere. So may pilots be, for all I know, or care; but the work of the world has still to be done just the same.

Propaganda Value: Of the vaguest.

SPECIAL PREVIEW

(*for our Registered Readers only*)

MEET D.N.L.'s new contemporary, *British Picture News*, kindly sent to us by the editor, who is to be found (all anonymous) at 10 Rathbone Street—the premises of Ernest J. Day & Co., who print it. *British Picture News* is an Eagle-Lion effort, and, in case you live in such remote parts that you haven't yet heard of Eagle-Lion, permit us to inform you that Eagle-Lion Distributors was recently formed by Mr. J. A. Rank to handle the overseas distribution of his product.

You cannot, alas! follow your immediate impulse and rush out and buy *British Picture News*, because it is plainly marked "For Export Only", and in any case, as no price is marked on it, it doesn't want you to buy it even if you could.

However, the faithful Editorial Board of D.N.L. feels you should know a little about this jolly production, which is lavishly illustrated and printed on paper every bit as shiny as that of the Trade Press. Permit us, therefore, to take you on an all too brief tour through the varied landscape of *British Picture News*, so that you may get some slight impression of its functions, which, you will find, are not only the boosting of Eagle-Lion product, but also involve direct British propaganda.

The Cover

The cover, chaste in red on white, shows a wash drawing of Pinewood Studios from above, with a caption which says: "An Aerial View showing one of the magnificent Studio Plants in the heart of the English Countryside now working night and day producing the new British Motion Pictures for World audiences." Pinewood by the way is at present occupied by three Government Film Units—the Army, R.A.F. and Crown Units respectively. But don't let that worry you, any more than the house-agent's angle about "the heart of the countryside", because you probably haven't been to Pinewood and anyhow there is a lot of grass and trees around there.

Page 2 has a good selection of stills from "the smash hit" *This Happy Breed*.

Page 3 has a large, impressive, and rather attractive photograph of Mr. Rank, together with a statement signed by him and headed "Intention and Desire". It explains, very properly, that Mr. Rank wants to present good British pictures to the audiences of the world, has formed Eagle-Lion distributors for that purpose, and what's more, has put Mr. E. T. Carr in charge.

> "It is my earnest wish" he concludes "that the pictures offered will be *different* from those of our competitors and in every way upholding the British character, which in the past few dark years, has never failed to shine."

Page 4, is an advertisement for *This Happy Breed*.

Page 5 features the Editorial, which modestly and indeed very correctly states that *British Picture News* marks a new departure (would not "arrival" have been a better-omened word?) in the British Film world. It urges foreign editors to make full use of all information given in the paper, and promises early replies to all queries and correspondence. But we cannot withhold from you any longer a fuller view of the prose style of the Editor, and we reveal it forthwith in the following pregnant paragraph:

> "The war, with its tremendous advance made by science in such mediums as radio-aircraft-photography, etc., the full extent of which has not yet been seen by the public, has made the world a much smaller place for all to live in."

Thanking you one and all. Also on page 5 is an article which explains, very properly, that Mr. Rank wants to present good British pictures to the audiences of the world, has formed Eagle-Lion Distributors for that purpose, and, what's more, has put Mr. E. T. Carr in charge.

Page 6 has an article on the Team Spirit, referring to the Noel Coward film team, and the Archers. This would be more cogent if it was written in less surrealist English. We quote:—

> "*This Happy Breed* has of course already been seen on the screens and created records not only in the box office, but in laughs as well, wherever it has been shown so far. Moving on the successful planet on which they have been riding, this team have just finished a picture not so far shown, but all ready to be seen. Taking the enormously successful Noel Coward play *Blithe Spirit*, these boys have made a picture that will fetch yells of laughter—from start to finish."

Page 7 is an advertisement for *Blithe Spirit*.

Page 8 has two advertisements, of which the more notable states (*inter alia*):—

> "The manufacturers of 'ASPRO' compliment the Eagle-Lion Distributors Ltd., on their enterprise in publishing the *British Picture News*. We are glad to be associated with this endeavour to make known to people overseas the character of British Industry and the high quality of its products."

Page 9 is Studio Gossip, and is the same as the Studio Gossip you read on the Studio Gossip page of those periodicals which print a page of Studio Gossip. (Pardon us, but the thing is infectious.)

Now on page 10 we get some excitement. "Wherever Youth Gathers" says a modest headline, and off we go (hold your hats):—

> "Whilst chatting to Mr. R. R. Tomlinson, A.R.C.A., R.B.A. (Acting Principal of an L.C.C. Central School for Arts and Crafts), a silver cigarette case and tray caught my eye—the sun from the window was playing weird patterns on the fine etching on the lid and I had to enquire the maker. On being told that they have been made by some of the students at the school, I most naturally asked to view some more of this work—I was astounded.
>
> "Mr. Tomlinson, seizing the opportunity of 'flooring' me altogether, remarked that this school had a hand in the making of the now world famous Stalingrad Sword—the story of which I give you herewith."

After which we hear no more about Mr. T.'s school, but get the story of the Stalingrad Sword, which leads up to a terrific punch sentence, which might surely have been penned by Charlotte Brontë or some other dame:—

> "Like the ever-increasing high standard of our films, so it is with the arts and crafts of our young Englishmen who will be called upon to execute even higher standards in the near future."

This page also has an article, in the same style, on "Films our children like in their Matinées"; these, we learn, are Westerns, Animal Films ("this type of film is the easiest means whereby an adult can really get into close contact with the child—from personal observance the sheep-dog film commands their closest interest"), Short Films (not cartoons) and Serials.

Page 11 is an advertisement for *Fanny by Gaslight*.

Ever so Subtle

Page 12 switches us to propaganda, ever so subtle:—"A Slight Miscalculation! by Adolph!!" it says, and the context makes it clear that it means Adolf Hitler, for there are extensive quotations from his speeches, a picture of him in bad shape, and a picture of Winston in a bathing suit and carrying a towel, captioned "Adolph's Boss!!" Then in column 4 is an address to the said Adolph on British war achievements, which concludes, in capitals:—

> "We don't wish to be rude, but we think you are rather a silly little man—Adolph!! Who do you think we are?"

Then there is a line, and under it, rather mysteriously, the statement "Henry V was a bit awkward too!!" Does this mean the bloke or the film?

Page 13 is an advertisement for *Mr. Emmanuel*.

Page 14 is an advertisement for *Henry V*.

Page 15 has two photographs of London, the first being of the model of Elizabethan London built for *Henry V* and the second a photograph

SIGHT and SOUND

A cultural Quarterly

MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

appraising educational and entertainment values

Published by: The British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

Special Preview (*continued*)

of Trafalgar Square (pre-war). The captions state, with an admirable sense of history, that "The British were here then and the British are here now." Think this one over in your bath.

Page 16 is a selection of stills from *Mr. Emmanuel*.

And now, chickabiddies, for Uncle D.N.L.'s favourite page, 17 is the number, and we can't tear ourselves away. It is headed "One million pounds makes two pictures", and then goes bashing along in a series of short sharp paragraphs with a big round blob at the beginning of each one, to help you find the first word. Here, with joy, and almost with reverence, we quote a few extracts. First, about *Henry V*:—

> "All those critics who have in the past said subjects of William Shakespeare were not 'box office' will have a shock. . . . The writer has seen the picture. . . . Olivier has performed an amazing feat. . . . Men and women in particular will be thrilled, and children in particular will love it. . . . Tom Mix could not have done better. . . . The story, language, and idea are clear to all and the action is only equalled by the magnificent music."

Caesar and Cleopatra

Second, about *Caesar and Cleopatra*:—

> "To put any Bernard Shaw work on the screen it is essential it is done in a 'big' way. . . . Pascal is now putting Bernard Shaw's comedy *Caesar and Cleopatra* on the screen, in Technicolor. . . . The production—now in full stride—will take over a year to finish. . . . The cast is enormous as are also the sets and everything connected with the picture. . . . No picture will have had more lavish thought given to its production."

Now do give yourselves a treat and re-read that bit about "Men and women in particular".

Oh boy, here's page 18, with a Puzzle Corner for you. We're completely baffled—maybe you can help. It's headed "Those Script Writers" and it rushes off like this:—

> "One often pauses to wonder if the plots which abound in many of our films have any true foundation—mistresses, affaires of Lords with chorus girls. . . . A long way back in the distant past, such situations did occur and were generally associated with a house—such a house was St. Albans. This was built for the ducal baby of which Nell Gwynne was the mother, who threatened to throw it out of the window if Charles II did not stand by the infant."

Are you Okay? Take your time, don't hurry. Then there's a bit about Garrick's Villa, and Marble Hill, also historic hidey-holes for mistresses, and then the rest of the article, in full, reads like this:—

> "Hampton Court has housed many wives, of which Mary Tudor was one of the most startling. Dispatches were sent to all English Ambassadors, bonfires and torchlight processions were held in London, priests gave sermons, Antwerp rang its great cathedral bell, and the sailors on the Thames were given money for drink—all this, to announce the rumoured arrival of a Prince to Mary Tudor which she never had—the priests even went so far as to describe the lovely Prince.
>
> "Maybe that was the start of what we term today, high pressure publicity.
>
> "Blondes were in the majority among Englishwomen in Queen Elizabeth's day because vast numbers of women dyed their hair golden in imitation of the Queen."

Which script-writers? Can you help, please; it's driving us crackers.

Oh and on the same page is something by someone called Don Idon of the *Daily Mail* (maybe a distant relation of Don Iddon), which explains how much better we are in many respects than the Americans. Very cunning propaganda this.

Page 19 is a collection of stills from *A Canterbury Tale*.

Page 20 has a little red map of England and Wales and the Isle of Wight and Anglesey, omitting Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the main article begins:—

> "We British are notorious for one thing—we have a fetish for understating our case. From 1939 until 1944, the people of Great Britain performed tasks which in principle are little short of miracles."

We hope to send a special asbestos copy of this issue of D.N.L. to all our Scots readers, at no extra charge. The rest of the article details various aspects of the achievements of "the people of this tiny island of ours", one of which (Canadian papers please copy) is that:—

> "A Canadian-built Mosquito with American-built Rolls Royce engines, flew non-stop from North America to Britain in the record time of 6 hours 46 minutes."

Page 21 is an advertisement for *Caesar and Cleopatra*.

Page 22 is an advertisement for *G.-B.—Kalee*.

Page 23 has quite an interesting article on pooling studio wardrobes, and another article on a subject which must be very close and dear to the Editor of *British Picture News*, for it is headed "What is this Language—this Pidgin English."

Page 24 has a column called "This and That", which deals with "Art", "Planes delivered in Envelopes", "Peas nearly 3,300 years old", "Heart Meter", and "Insecticide for Military Use". It also has a column headed "Questions and Answers on the British Empire" which could have been better dealt with had the job been given to a child at any senior or secondary school—although no child, perhaps, could have achieved the sonorous prose and rolling periods of the conclusion:—

> "Maybe Britain has been guilty of grave offences in the government of India, but to obtain a final judgment one has to place the British achievements against the offences and thereby judge the net results.
>
> "Towards an equality of right among partners, the British Commonwealth is on the whole soundly working, and we shall not, if we are wise, destroy such integrations as history has bequeathed to us."

Will anyone volunteer to send us a symbolic oil painting of History Bequeathing an Integration? Expense no object.

Page 25 is a collection of stills from *The Way Ahead*.

Page 26 is an advertisement for Gainsborough Pictures.

Page 27 is an advertisement for *Mr. Emmanuel*.

Page 28 (the back cover) is an advertisement for the National Provincial Bank, notable for its representation of a proscenium arch (severely classical) encasing a cinema screen on which (signed fascimile by J. A. Rank) stands this message:—

> "From Production to Exhibition the phenomenal development of the Film Industry—especially the British Film Industry—owes much to the farsighted pioneering finance of National Provincial Bank."

And that concludes our conducted tour. Maybe you feel, as we do, that Mr. Rank should look into this little matter of *British Picture News* and, whatever he feels about its prose glories, or about its movie blurbs, should consider carefully whether the British propaganda angle is handled quite, quite as carefully and skilfully and tactfully as it might be. Some of us think that British propaganda overseas is vitally important to the people of this country, and should be conducted by experts, and with common sense.

But then who are we to talk? We edit a paper ourselves. . . .

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LIMITED

19 High Street, Leatherhead

Specialising in the Production of

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, INDUSTRIAL, AND DOCUMENTARY FILMS

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THE THIRD PHASE

By a Special Correspondent

For the people of Britain three phases of war can be distinguished. Each can be revealed by a question. The first—Can Britain survive? The second—Can Britain, with the help of her allies, not only survive but win decisively? The third—Can Britain find a place in the world after the war as commanding as the place she held before the war? The first two questions can be answered affirmatively. The answer to the third will not be clear till the people of Britain have been through a struggle of the spirit, in its way perhaps no less painful than the war of blood, sweat, toil and bombardment. For, to retain her commanding position in world affairs, Britain must re-assess her position in light of an economic and social background very different from that on which her national outlook was based till 1939.

Before the third question can be answered, the ground must be cleared. It is necessary to look, not only forward, but back. Some historians have said that Britain had become great by the time of Elizabeth because God had willed it so. Some have said that her eminence came from an inherited superiority mysteriously conferred upon her people. But more will agree that her greatness was not so much theological or genetical as geological. The fact that the seaboard of Britain compared to her land area is one of the longest of any country in the world, and that her ports and rivers are deep, navigable and safe, made her into a great country of ships. The smallness of the land encouraged a social integration more effective than any on the continent at the time. These things made her people adventurous, of an exploring mind, tough, self-reliant, active and united. The very chemistry of her soil made a grass so rich that her sheep grew the finest wool in Europe. This helped to make her into a nation of merchants as well as of marauding explorers.

Another geological accident made Britain into the greatest industrial nation in the world in the eighteenth century, and destroyed the hitherto-unchallenged industrial strength of Saxony and central Europe. Till the early eighteenth century, every process of metallurgy and industry was based on charcoal for smelting and heating. Then the supplies of wood became exhausted and industry turned to coal. Under the soil of Britain lay, not only coal in abundance, but iron, tin, copper, silver, lead, nickel and zinc. These minerals were ready to hand as soon as the technical problems of smelting by coke instead of charcoal had been solved. Britain's rivers and her coastal shipping offered means of transport which could not be equalled anywhere else. An age of coal, with heavy transport at first confined to water routes, made it inevitable that Britain should become the industrial centre of the world. To the qualities of Elizabethan Britain were added new skills and crafts, and the Elizabethan passion for exploration was channelled into scientific investigation.

Industry multiplied and railways covered the land. Britain exported her goods to all the corners of the earth. She "rationalised" her agriculture by the enclosures to feed her industrial populations, and caused great misery. The agricultural economy of the eighteenth century was gradually smashed, and by a fearful theory of supply and demand in terms of human lives, the factory workers who served the nineteenth century so well too often went hungry and ill. To home-produced raw materials were added imported raw materials, cotton, jute, silk, mahogany and Baltic fir, iron ore from Sweden, copper from Spain. The export trade grew, and industrial exports were paid for in the only commodity the consumer countries could offer; they were paid for in foodstuffs. Britain's industry was built up at the expense of what some felt to be her most precious asset—her agriculture. The drift from country to town was continuous, and grew steadily. (Till 1939, the Ministry of Agriculture, whose job it was to support British agriculture, fought a guerilla war with the Board of Trade and the Department of Overseas Trade, both fearful of upsetting the trade in beef from the Argentine, dairy products from Denmark, apples and wheat from Canada, wool and mutton from Australia and New Zealand.)

To complete this broad sketch, two other things must be introduced. From the seventeenth century Britain had exported, not only goods, but people who set up communities of their own and added to the number of Britain's customers, From the nineteenth century she exported credit in the form of loans in order that her industrial capacity could be used to the full. Credits and the service of transport by British merchant ships and a world-wide service of insurance made a prosperity which seemed eternal and ordained by God. Britain grew not only powerful, but complacent and more than a little self-satisfied. Her traders overseas felt they could do no wrong. If the benighted foreigner would not accept British goods as they were, the benighted foreigner could do without. So it was that Britain patronised the peoples of the commonwealth, despised America, disliked the French, avoided social contact with the Indians and pitied the Chinese. She made herself at once respected for her industrial skill and rectitude and unpopular for her high and mighty airs, but so long as her power rested on a real basis of economic strength, Britain's position was assured. The world saw that Britain's assessment of herself—however unpopular it might be—was founded on fact, and that her contributions to the world were great.

After World War II what will be Britain's economic and social position? Only on an assessment of this is it possible to judge what Britain's place in the world can be. Of her raw materials, tin, copper, silver, lead, nickel and zinc have long been exhausted. Of the new raw materials such as magnesium and aluminium she has little compared with other countries. Of ironstone, she only produces about a third of her needs. Only of coal has she abundance. The economics of war have turned many of the countries which were formerly her customers into industrial countries in their own right. Canada, Australia and India have become mighty producers in less than four years, and the world has found that there is no deep secret to be learned before factories can be built and worked wherever they may be needed. Between them, America and Russia have become the greatest industrial nations on earth and, in another generation, China may be their equal. Canada, Australia, New Zealand have found powerful and deeply rooted economies and cultures of their own. Many of Britain's credits have been used up to supply the munitions of victory, and many of the rest are locked up, if not lost, in German and Japanese loans, Portuguese trams and Chinese harbours. The strength of Britain's economy as she knew it has gone for good. She must find another which can command an equal respect from the world, or in a generation or two she will sink to a minor place in the community of nations. Before she can find another economy, she must free herself from an entanglement of values, survivals of Victorian power, which are now false.

It is possible here to make but a rough and short analysis of those things on which Britain's future can be built. First industry. Britain's coal and limestone, combined with her chemical industry, could produce results which would make Germany's *ersatz* economy look amateur. The Severn barrage may yet give a Niagara of power. But more precious than these materials are the qualities of her people—toughness, endurance and self-assurance, which won the battle of Britain and mastered the blitz; skill, craftsmanship and aptitude for research which are unequalled and which can serve the whole world well.

Second agriculture. Britain's agricultural land is among the richest in the world. It can become Britain's basic raw material. For the war has made Britain's agricultural economy powerful indeed, and the most highly mechanised in the world. Here lie possibilities of an internal strength which could be an unshakable foundation for any enterprise she may wish to develop.

If Britain offers her great qualities to the world after the war freely and in a spirit of collaboration for the common good, the answer to the question, "Can Britain find a commanding place in the world after the war?" will be affirmative. But if she attempts to support her position on the complacency and superiority-sense left over from the nineteenth century, she will be left high and dry by the tide of world affairs. Before Britain can sober up after the banquet of Victorian prosperity and find herself a new philosophy, there must be hard and painful thinking.

It is certain that the pull between complacency and the new outlook, between the old backward looking philosophy and the new forward looking philosophy, will be reflected in that most sensitive medium, the film. The very fact that the Government through the Ministry of Information and the British Council produces such a huge volume of films provides an opportunity to assess the drift of sentiment within the Government. Will it be officially recognised in 1945, for instance, that British Council films serve mainly to undermine the faith of peoples overseas in Britain's regeneration. For British Council films represent, not the healthy qualities of the British people, but the meretricious sentiments of a few dilettante and Foreign Office patriarchs who have not yet seen that the old world has gone. Will the M.O.I. produce films broad and international in appeal, designed to put Britain into world perspective? Or will the Ministry use the pressure of short term local needs as an excuse to focus the creative film work of this country on the parish pump? On the answers to these questions much will depend.

FILMS and the U.S. ARMY

(By courtesy of the U.S. Signal Corps)

THE Army Pictorial Service, Signal Corps, U.S. Army, is charged with the production and distribution of all films to be used in the training of personnel of the Army Service Forces and the Army Ground Forces. The films thus produced and distributed are designed to fit into specific training programmes which have been planned for the development of technical and military skills, an understanding of the backgrounds and causes of the war, the nature of the enemy, and the will to carry through under the toughest combat conditions.

As an indication of the extent to which the mission of the Army Pictorial Service has been accomplished, at the present time, in the continental United States alone, over 10,500,000 hours of the G.I. soldier's time is spent *each month* seeing War Department training films. This is the equivalent of the work that would be done by 35,000 men working for thirty days at a rate of ten hours a day. (It should be borne in mind that these figures do not include Army Air Forces.)

Film Libraries

Film libraries have been established in the nine Service Commands in the United States, and in overseas theatres of operations. These film libraries, all of which operate under the command of the Commanding General of the Service Commands or Theatres, serve as local and regional supply points. There is a central film library at every Service Command and Theatre Headquarters, and under the supervision of the central libraries are numerous sub-libraries, located wherever there is a concentration of troops in training. It is the function of the central film library to serve as a supply depot for the sub-libraries, in addition to serving headquarters and other units located at points where sub-library facilities are non-existent. Both films and projectors are made available to troop units from these libraries upon a daily or weekly loan basis. After use, films and projectors are returned to the film library for inspection and reissue. As a result of pooling projectors in film libraries, it has been possible to accommodate over 200,000 16 mm. film showings per month with less than 4,000 active projectors.

Film libraries on large posts operate under a trained specialist, officer or civilian, who co-ordinates the activities of the film library with the needs of the training officers. It is his job to ensure that the training officers at his post, camp or station are acquainted with the films that are available from the film library, and that they are immediately informed of any new films that may be of value for the particular type of training that is being carried on. These activities of the Visual Aids Co-ordinator are carried on by means of personal contacts, regularly scheduled previews, and announcements in daily bulletins, camp newspapers, etc. The Visual Aids Co-ordinator also operates the film library so that films and projectors are efficiently scheduled, delivered, inspected and maintained for use in the training programme. He also organises and establishes projectionist training programmes, so that two G. Ls in every company are trained to operate and care for projectors, are licensed for this purpose, and are schooled in the elements of showmanship essential to the effective use of films in the Army training programme. A recent survey of the condition of films in the film libraries made by representatives of a large film manufacturing concern revealed that amazingly little film damage has resulted from faulty operation of projectors. The extremely low rate of film damage is the direct result of the thorough projectionist training programme.

The Visual Aids Co-ordinator is the key to the film distribution and utilisation programme, since he acts as the retailer, delivers the goods to the customer and constantly works over the local market to see that no opportunity is lost to serve his customers (the training officers). Frequently, he is used by training officers as a home demonstrator, helping young and inexperienced instructors to make the most effective use of films in the training programme. These Visual Aids Co-ordinators have been carefully selected and specially trained for their job by the Army Pictorial Service.

The daily on-the-job work of the Visual Aids Co-ordinator with training officers has done much not only to increase the use of films to almost phenomenal figures, but to improve the method of use so that films are wisely selected, employed in their proper place in the training programme, and there is proper introduction and follow up of film use by Army instructors. The enthusiastic devotion to duty of the Visual Aids Co-ordinator has resulted in the provision of adequate housing for film libraries in convenient locations, for the storage, inspection, maintenance, and delivery of films and projectors, preview rooms where instructors see all new films and work out lesson plans on all films, a standard system of booking films, and a careful control of film stock which has resulted in the elimination of all dead stock from libraries with great savings in prints and print stock.

Some of the Visual Aids Co-ordinators come from the visual education field, but most of them were selected upon graduation from OCS for qualities deemed necessary to the work. Some come from the advertising field, others from radio, and still others are architects, artists, salesmen, school teachers, and photographers. All are alert, energetic, and enthusiastic about the value of films in training and the need for the tireless attention to detail that is essential to the smooth running operation of a film library.

The total personnel presently engaged in the operation of film libraries in the continental U.S. are as follows:

76 Officers (including WAC).
598 Enlisted personnel (including WAC).
356 Civilians.

In the continental United States, there are, at this writing, more than two hundred film libraries, and a total of more than eighty overseas theatres, strategically located to supply films where films are needed.

All prints used by the various libraries are initially distributed by the Signal Corps Photographic Centre, New York City. Soon after production starts on a new film the distribution machinery is in motion. To each central film library in the continental United States is sent an advance notification of the film. The notification contains information as to the film content, its place in the training programme, the type of troops for which it is designed and such other

(continued overleaf)

★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in kinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Kinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

Kinematograph WEEKLY

★ 93 LONG ACRE LONDON W.C.2

Films of the U.S. Army (*cont.*)

matters of policy concerning the use of the film as may be pertinent. With this information available to the Visual Aids Co-ordinators of the various libraries they are able to consult with training officers and make accurate estimates as to the number of prints which will be required. The estimated requirements of the various sub-libraries are edited at the central library and a consolidated requisition is then forwarded to the Commanding Officer of the Signal Corps Photographic Centre, by whom shipment is made to each film library.

The officers in charge of the various central film libraries keep close watch over the stocks of film in the various sub-libraries and the monthly use of all prints. It is therefore possible for stock to be shifted from one library to another, as training programmes develop in their various cycles. Copies of the monthly reports of film stock are forwarded to the Signal Corps Photographic Centre and are studied there for indications as to trends in the various Commands and Theatres in order to more closely correlate supply and use.

During the month of June, 1944, through the use of the film library facilities in the continental United States alone, attendance figures of a few of the most widely used films were as follows:—

Titles	*Attendance*
The Battle of China	593,332
Baptism of Fire	204,164
The Negro Soldier	349,524
First Aid for Battle Injuries	453,606
Military Courtesy	275,378
Map Reading	353,708

Taken on a basis of the number of showings in the continental United States the system provided facilities for over 200,000 16 mm. showings during the month of June to an average audience of 120 men for each showing.

To summarise, the film distribution and film library programme developed by the Army Pictorial Service of the Signals Corps is unique among the armed forces in these respects:

(*a*) To make the maximum of the minimum supply of films and projection equipment, a system of film libraries has developed in all Service Commands and Theatres of Operations to supply films and projectors on daily loan to all troop units.

(*b*) The Visual Aids Co-ordinator in charge of each large film library is the key to the development of wide use of films in the training programme and to the correlation of supply of films with this use.

(*c*) Distribution of films is tailored to the training requirements of individual troop units. Advance notification of all forthcoming films is made to film libraries while the films are in production, and supply is determined on the basis of known planned use.

(*d*) A system of monthly reports of print stock and print use on all films in each library makes possible the shifting of film from library to library or from the continental United Sates to overseas Theatres to meet changes in training requirements and troop strength throughout the world, and provides a ready index as to the amount of reserve stock required for all film subjects. These reports on film use also provide a key for new film production and an objective basis for appraising reaction of training officers to existing films.

(*e*) A system of projectionist training has resulted in reduction of film damage to a minimum.

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LAND OF PROMISE, a film about Homes and Housing, in the style of WORLD of PLENTY; script by Wolfgang Wilhelm, Miles Malleson, Ara Calder-Marshall, Miles Tomalin; associate-director Francis Gysin; music by William Alwyn; diagrams by the Isotype Institute; sets by Isobel Alexander; with John Mills, Miles Malleson, Herbert Lomas, Marjorie Rhodes, Frederick Allen, Henry Hallett, Elizabeth Cowell, Sir Ernest Simon and Father John Groser. A film to show the Civic Activities of MANCHESTER in relation to democratic control and citizenship, treatment by Walter Greenwood. WORKER and WAR-FRONT Series, Issue No. 15; Organiser Duncan Ross, Editor Rosanne Hunter.

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Film Societies

Merseyside Film Institute Society has continued to hold its monthly meetings in the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool. At the opening performance *Chaplin Festival* was shown with *Welcome to Britain*, and at the second performance a programme of international flavour included *Professor Mamlock*, *Toscanini*, *Common Ground* (British Council), and *Nations Within a Nation*, Paramount's account of how men and women from the Continent have found refuge in this country. The complete version of *Fantasia* was shown at the December performance, with Pal's *Mr. Straus Takes a Walk*. *Un Carnet de Bal* was shown on New Year's Day, and *The Heart of a Nation* was announced for January 23.

Edinburgh Film Guild produced a distinctly nostalgic flavour by adding *Next Time We See Paris* and *Cambridge* to the programme with *Un Carnet de Bal*. Similarly, with *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki*, several films of a sympathetic nature were shown, including *The Valley of the Tennessee*, *The New Crop*, and one of Cekalski's films of Polish peasant dances. *Strange Incident* was shown with *Welcome to Britain* at the December performance. The special week-night showings of the Capra films with equivalent British documentaries have been so successful that the available accommodation has been strained.

Dundee Film Society has included two Russian films, *Childhood of Maxim Gorki* and *Baltic Deputy*, in the first half of its season, which ended on December 3 with *Le Jour se Lève*. Other films shown have included *Toscanini* and two of the Capra series, *Prelude to War* and *The Nazis Strike*.

London Film Institute Society has revived two notable silent films, *Turksib* and *The Italian Straw Hat*. *Strange Incident* has also been shown and the December performance consisted of a programme of Dance and Ballet films—an idea with which several societies have experimented from time to time.

Film Society of Ayrshire has shown *Thunder Rock*, *Avalanche*, and *Citizen Kane*. Capra's "Why We Fight" series is also being shown.

A new film society has been formed at **Montrose.** A leading part in the arrangements has been played by Duncan Fraser, formerly associated with the Scottish educational film movement and now editor of the *Montrose Standard*.

Belfast Film Institute Society has revived the Soviet classic *New Babylon* and other programmes have included films from the Capra "Why We Fight" series and *Welcome to Britain*. An interesting feature of the Society's monthly bulletin, the *Belfast Film Revue*, is its notes on the month's local releases.

It is good to see two new Societies getting under way this season with well chosen programmes. The Portlaoighise Branch of the **Irish Film Society** has shown at its first performance *World of Plenty*, *Listen to Britain* and *Winter on the Farm*. The second half of the programme included a lecture by Mr. Liam O'Laoghaire on "Film Societies and the Films They Show".

The other newcomer is a Film Society operating in the **Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley** District, which plans a season of eleven shows, an ambitious beginning, and programmes have so far included *New Earth*, *Children of the City*, *Patterns of American Rural Art*, *Enough to Eat* and *World of Plenty*. *La Bête Humaine* and *Film and Reality* are planned for the future, and a serious attempt is being made to base programmes on a single theme. The M. of I. Film Officer for the N.W. Region is to give a lecture on "Film Appreciation".

Correspondence

Dear Sir,

In the last issue of *D.N.L.* (No. 4) Mr. Mason suggested that I had not gone far enough into the functions of a film society as an advance guard. I have no quarrel with this observation. So far, in *D.N.L.* articles, I have limited myself largely to discussion of programme composition because I felt—and the Editorial Board of *D.N.L.* agreed—that this would prove must useful to film societies. But this should not be held to infer that I hold a narrow view of the functions of a film society. It has wider functions than the mere showing of films.

In future articles I hope to have an opportunity of developing these points. For the present, however, I would like to indicate how the film society I know best has been carrying out the aims mentioned by Mr. Mason. These might be summarised as: discussion, M. of I. activities, production, civic films, and scientific films.

Discussion: in pre-war seasons the society followed every performance with a discussion session at which the films were analysed, frequently by guests expert on the subjects they dealt with. Whenever possible producers were invited to these sessions to expound their aims and, on occasion, to defend the results. During the war these discussions have formed part of special week night performances. When conditions allow they will be resumed on the former scale.

M. of I. activities: the Regional Film Officer has addressed the society on his work. M. of I. films are regularly included in the programmes. A special performance of Scottish films produced by the M. of I. for the Scottish Government Departments was given in the spring of 1944.

Production: in pre-war years the society held film festivals for amateurs in the area. Well-known producers advised amateurs on those occasions. Exhibitions on aspects of production—most recently of film décor—have been held from time to time.

Civic films: the society has taken the initiative in the formation of a committee representative of civic and business interests whose aim is the production of films on the city's life. A committee of the society is responsible for the collection and arrangements for the preservation of films already produced on life in the city and the surrounding area. The society arranged programmes of planning films at a recent housing exhibition.

Scientific films: the society held a special performance of scientific films out of which has grown this season a Scientific Film Society which now has a membership of about 600.

I think that these observations make it clear that the functions mentioned by Mr. Mason are in fact being carried out by film societies.

H. FORSYTH HARDY

30th December, 1944.

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Stereoscopy

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TEN years have passed since Semyon Ivanov invented the first stereoscopic cinema requiring no special glasses to be worn by the spectator.

He is 35 years old, the son of a shoemaker in a little Central Asian village. Because of the dire poverty of his parents he took to the road while still very young, trekking from Central Asia to Siberia and back, earning his keep as shoemaker, farm hand, smith, mechanic, actor and artist.

The first stereoscopic films produced in Moscow shortly before the war were very successful. The effects amazed the audiences. For the first time, film fans saw birds that seemed to fly away from the screen nearly over their heads, saw crashing waves that threw liquid gems nearly into their laps.

Ivanov's invention has often been described in the press. In the main, it consists of a calibrated screen upon which two films depicting the same scene from different angles are simultaneously projected by the usual machines.

When the proper focus is found both films merge into one and produce the effect of a three dimensional picture. Much has been written about this stereoscopic screen composed of 36,000 very thin copper wires running in different directions in conformity with certain calculations. It takes about 112 miles of wire to make a screen of 25 square yards.

Ivanov, striving tirelessly to improve his invention, has discovered during the war that the wire can be replaced by very thin optical lenses with a conical surface. Thousands of such lenses are fitted on a mirror. On such a screen the stereoscopic effect is much clearer. The mirror used as a screen may weight as much as a ton.

Ivanov has just presented his country with another innovation—the "integral" screen, a new development of his earlier discovery.

His remarkable inventions have earned him a Stalin Prize. He also wears a military decoration. On the outbreak of the war he joined the People's Volunteer Force and found himself in Leningrad. Here he decided to put his knowledge of stereoscopics to use under front line conditions. He began to teach the Soviet scouts to see the enemy with two eyes by using his stereoscopic instruments.

No one could decipher aerial photographs more accurately than Ivanov. Various details assumed entirely different shapes when examined with his instruments. Ivanov could disclose the most cunningly camouflaged positions and trenches. It was he who, examining an aerial photo, discovered the position of two German armoured trains which had been shelling Leningrad.

Professor Peter Kapitza, the famous Soviet scientist, calls Ivanov his godson. He believes that Ivanov's stereoscopic discoveries are of world-wide importance.

Many of the young inventor's plans will be realised in the near future. Burdenko, Chief Surgeon of the Red Army, is interested in his experiments. Stereoscopic X-ray photographs will be far more effective than the usual film in disclosing internal injuries, their depth and character.

At present Ivanov is working out methods for the mass production of his stereoscopic lens screens. Twenty stereoscopic cinemas are to be opened in various cities of the Soviet Union in the near future.

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